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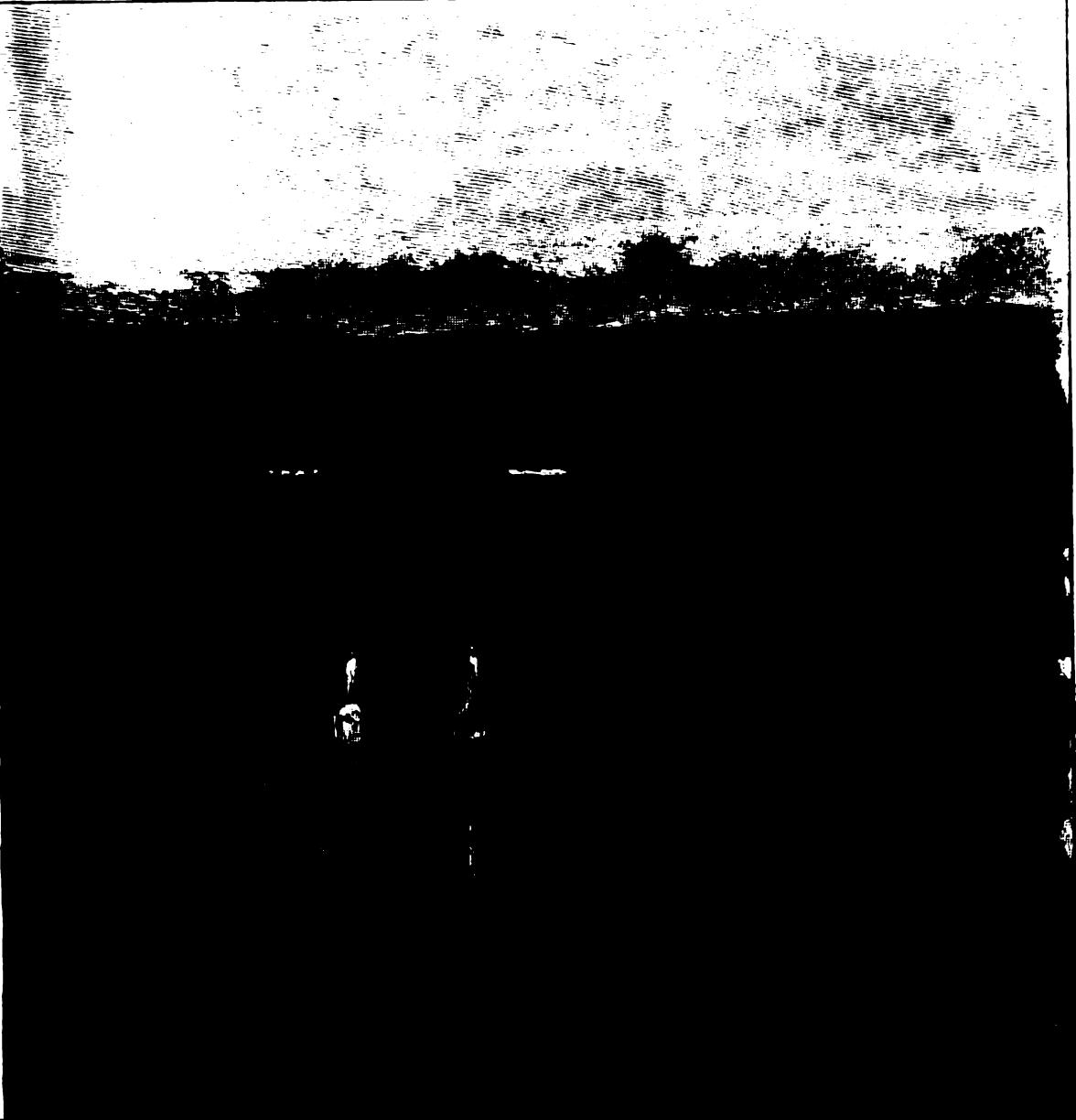
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Constantinople

Francis Marion Crawford

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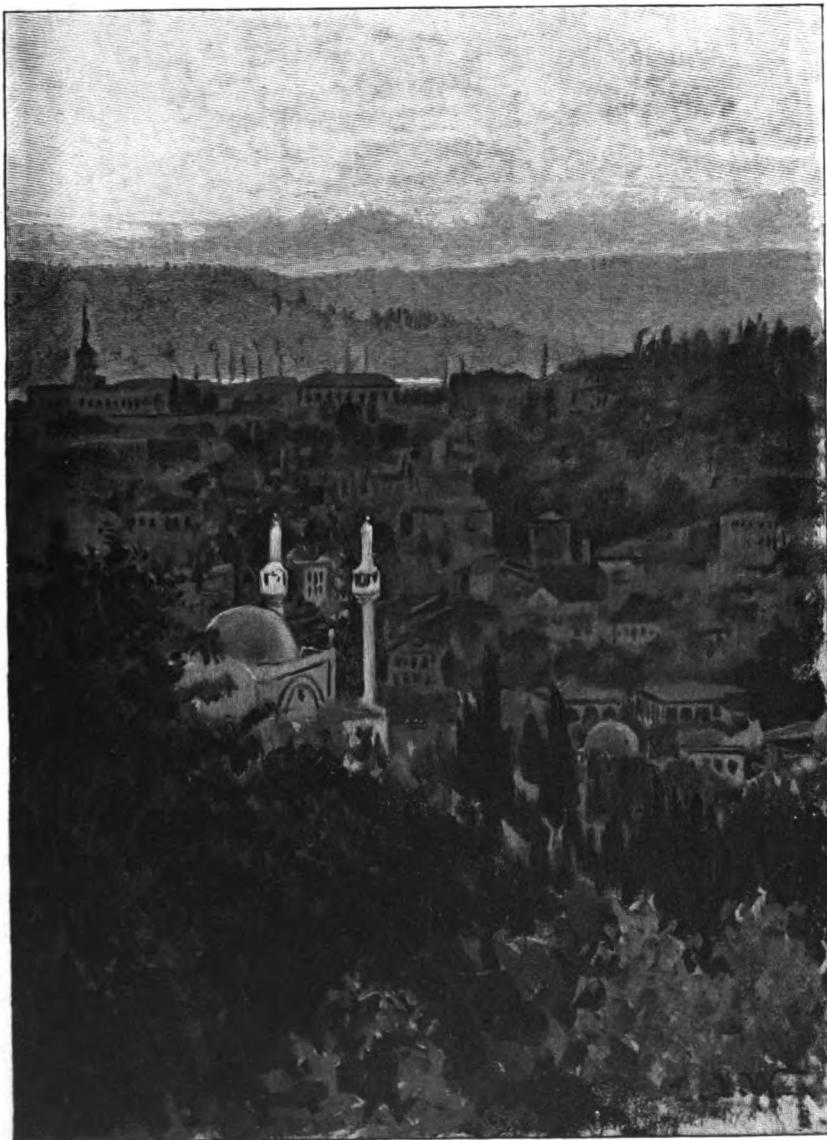
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CONSTANTINOPLE



CONSTANTINOPLE.

CONSTANTINOPLE

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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1895

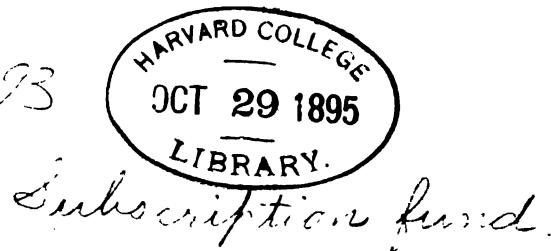
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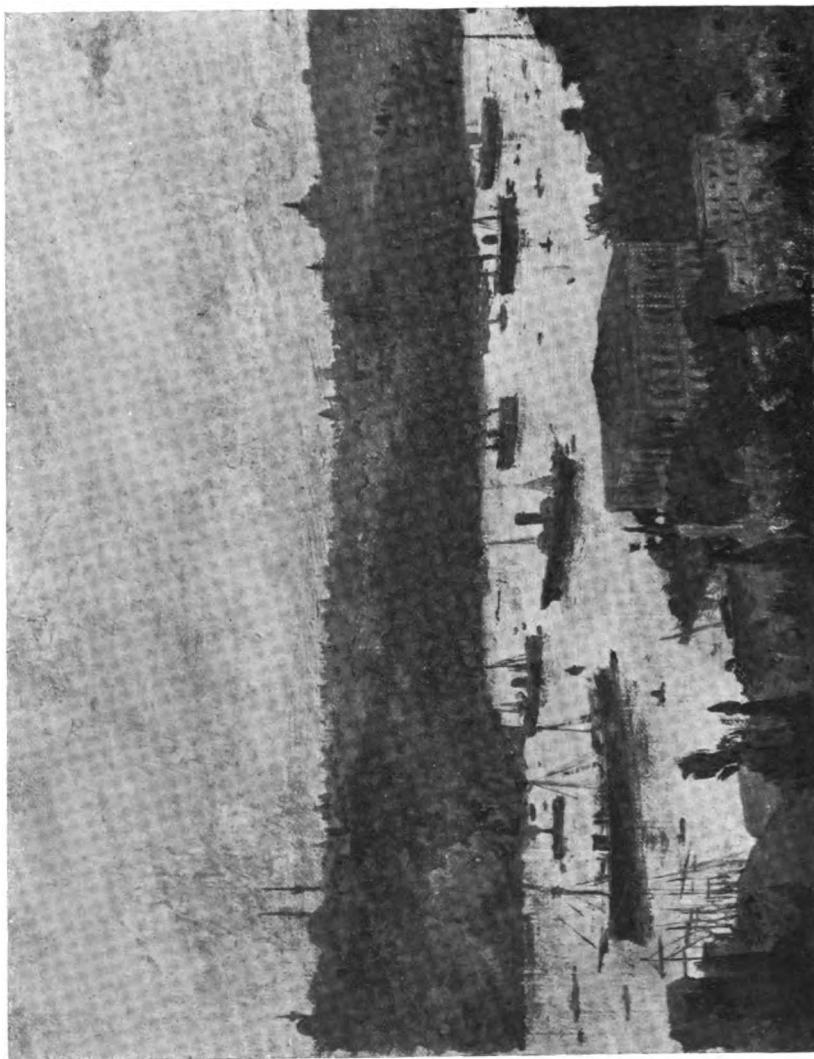
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CONSTANTINOPLE

I

“BLESSED shall he be who shall take Constantinople,” said the Prophet. Many desperate fights were fought and many valiant blows were struck in the endeavor to earn that promised blessing. Eyub, Mohammed’s brave companion in arms, perished in the first attempt made by the Arabs to win the capital of the East. The Crusaders took it and got scant blessings, and did more destruction in one week than all other conquerors in twelve centuries or thereabouts; and at last came a successor and namesake of the Prophet himself, Mehemet the Fateh, he who of all others is called by the Turks the Conqueror, to this day. Though the whole great empire of the first Constantine had dwindled, in the days of the last of the name, to the narrow limits comprised within the walls of the city, a war of several years’ duration was the price paid by Mehemet for the few miles of land that lie between Rumeli Hissar and St. Sophia. Impregnable castles had to be built, vast intrenchments had to be dug, and the invading fleet had to be hauled up high and dry upon the shores of the Bosphorus and taken overland upon wheels to be launched again upon the waters of the Golden Horn. And then, at the

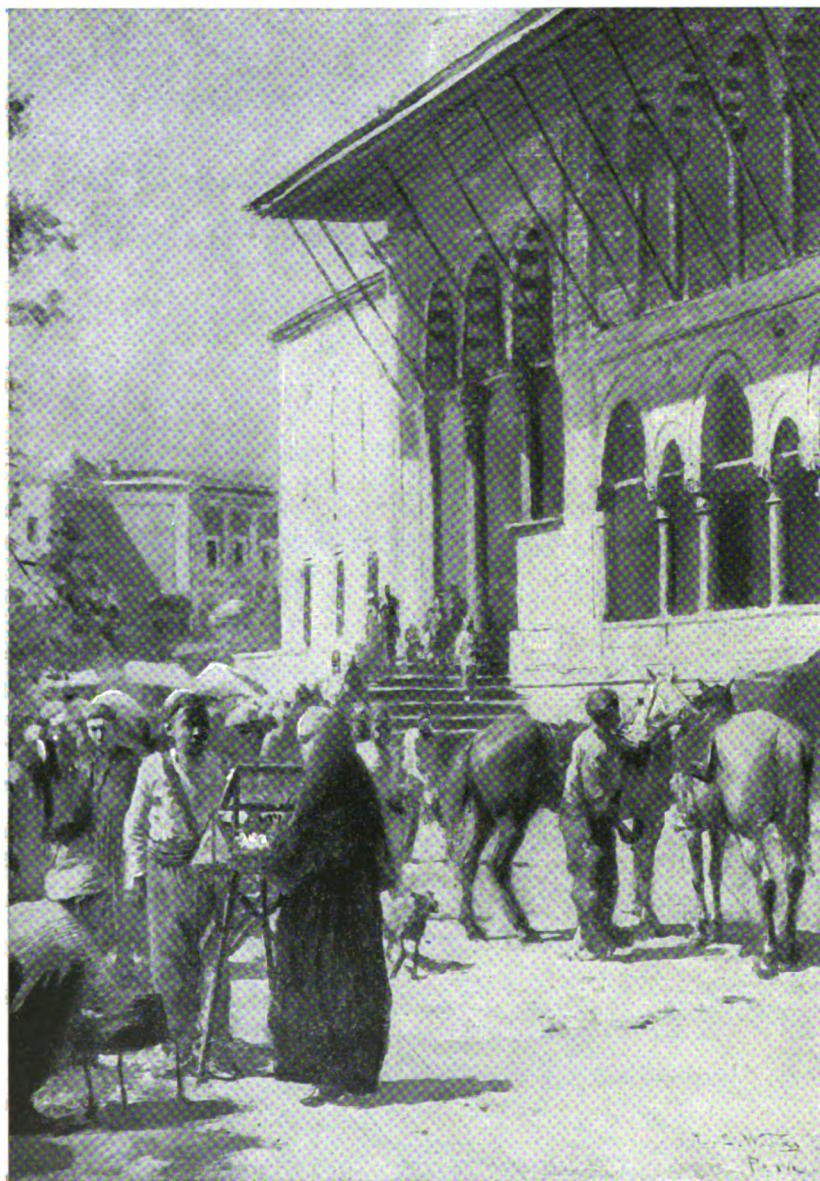
very end, the last struggle was the fiercest of all, the last of the emperors fell fighting desperately on foot at the gate of his own capital, and the conqueror, riding high upon the heaps of slain in the south aisle of St. Sophia, smote the pillar nearest to him with his reeking hand and left there his bloody sign manual, to be a token of his victory even to this day. So says tradition, at least; but in these latter days it is even denied that there was any massacre at all within the walls of the church, and we are confidently told that the Christians assembled therein were taken captive without bloodshed. Yet we who live in this age of light and progress, when armies are destroyed by machinery and empires spring up in a night, like mushrooms, bloom for a day like cabbage-roses, and vanish on the morrow like smoke, far too unstable to fall under one simile, we cling with an unconscious love of romance to the short, sharp, cruel deeds done in those days of faith and passion. We would rather stand in the dim aisle of the great mosque and believe for a moment that the savage warrior marked it for his own with Christian blood, than pore for hours over the elaborate schemes of mobilization which are to open the chess-play of the next nineteenth century conquest. In that one impress, if it be genuine, or in the story of it, if it be but a story, all the romance and history of the East seem to find one common centre. At the moment when that mark was made the West met the East and fell before it; in that instant, what had been sank back into the deep perspective of past dreamland and the future began to be present. The last stronghold of the old empire was stormed by the red-handed founders of the new, and the Constantinople of Constantine,

of Justinian, and of the Greek emperors, had ceased to be. The rich jewel of gold and precious stones, set, as it were at the joining of three silver waters, was wrested by strong hands from Europe's neck to be the chief light in Asia's crown. The shadows of the great actors of the past, the ghost of Justinian, the passionate wraith of Theodora, the melancholy spectre of blind Belisarius, shrank out of sight into those vast halls and pillared galleries which spread beneath Stamboul, and the corse of their slaughtered descendant was still bleeding from a hundred wounds when the master of their inheritance invoked upon himself and his race the blessing promised by the Prophet of Allah, nearly eight hundred years before that day.

It has not often happened in history that a city which has been the capital of an empire during more than a thousand years has, within twenty-four hours, become the capital of another, founded and developed by a race having a totally different language, a hostile religion and traditions opposed at every point to those of the vanquished. The change after Mehemet's conquest must have been as prodigious as it was sudden, and, on the whole, what took place is greatly to the credit of the conqueror. From that day to this there has never, I believe, been anything like a persecution of Christians or Jews in Constantinople. Taking Stamboul, Pera, and Scutari together, there are probably more Christians in the capital to-day than Mussulmans, a fact which can only be attributed to principles of toleration for which the Turks have not generally received credit. The principal churches were indeed converted into mosques, and the cross was every-

where replaced by the crescent, while the innumerable paintings and mosaics representing sacred personages, saints, and angels were immediately, and in most cases permanently, hidden from view by a thick coating of whitewash. The rigid simplicity of the Mohammedan faith substituted in their place a few names—Allah, Mohammed, Abu Bekr, Hassan, Hossein, Omar, Osman, and Ali, and every mosque in Stamboul, and perhaps throughout the Mohammedan world, is decorated with those eight names magnificently written in Arabic characters upon eight shields which are hung around the interior. But the Turk was not destructive. On the contrary, he took the Christian Church as his model for his own place of worship, and almost all the Turkish mosques are more or less direct imitations of St. Sophia.

Much of the romance which clings to Constantinople is founded, I believe, upon this and like facts; in other words, upon the immense body of widely varying traditions inherent in every building and object which has survived the revolutions of ages. The church of St. Sophia is the type of one class, the headless Delphic serpent which stands in the Hippodrome represents another. It was a strange fatality which brought by Constantine's hand the pedestal of the Delphic Tripod to the spot which originally had been settled in obedience to the command of the Delphic oracle; there is an air of fatality also about the tradition that the conqueror who came to give a third name to the capital of the East, struck off the third head of the serpent with his battle-axe on the day he entered the city. Certainly but few objects now known to exist have been more intimately connected with the history of



Entrance to Seraskierat Mosque.

the world's earliest civilization than this relic of the Pythoness. It is headless, but otherwise intact. There it stands in the midst of the Hippodrome, under the blazing Eastern sun, seeming to await some new destiny yet to be. Who knows but that, before another century has run out, strong hands may take it from its place and set it up and build a temple over it, and restore its three-fanged heads, even as they were in the days when Phœbus Apollo was master before the great Pan died? Who knows but that another conqueror may be already born, who shall tear down the shields of Allah, Mohammed, and the six Imams, and set up his golden eikons in their place. For my own part, I would rather not think of that day if so be that it is already marked upon the future's calendar. And yet, even though the Osmanli may sink again some day into the Asiatic darkness from which he came, Constantinople, under a new name, perhaps, will still and ever be the capital of the East, the golden key to Asia, the jewel coveted for many crowns, in strife for which the greedy nations will contend to the very end of time.

The most striking peculiarity of Constantinople is the immense vitality which has carried it through so many deaths. It is common to speak of Turkey as the "sick man," and to associate ideas of ruin and decay with one of the most intensely living cities in the world. But no one who has spent even twenty-four hours on either side of the Golden Horn could ever conceive of anything even distantly approaching to stagnation in the streets of Stamboul, or on Galata Bridge, or in the busy quarters of Galata itself, or of Pera above. Coming from Europe, whether from Italy or Austria, one is

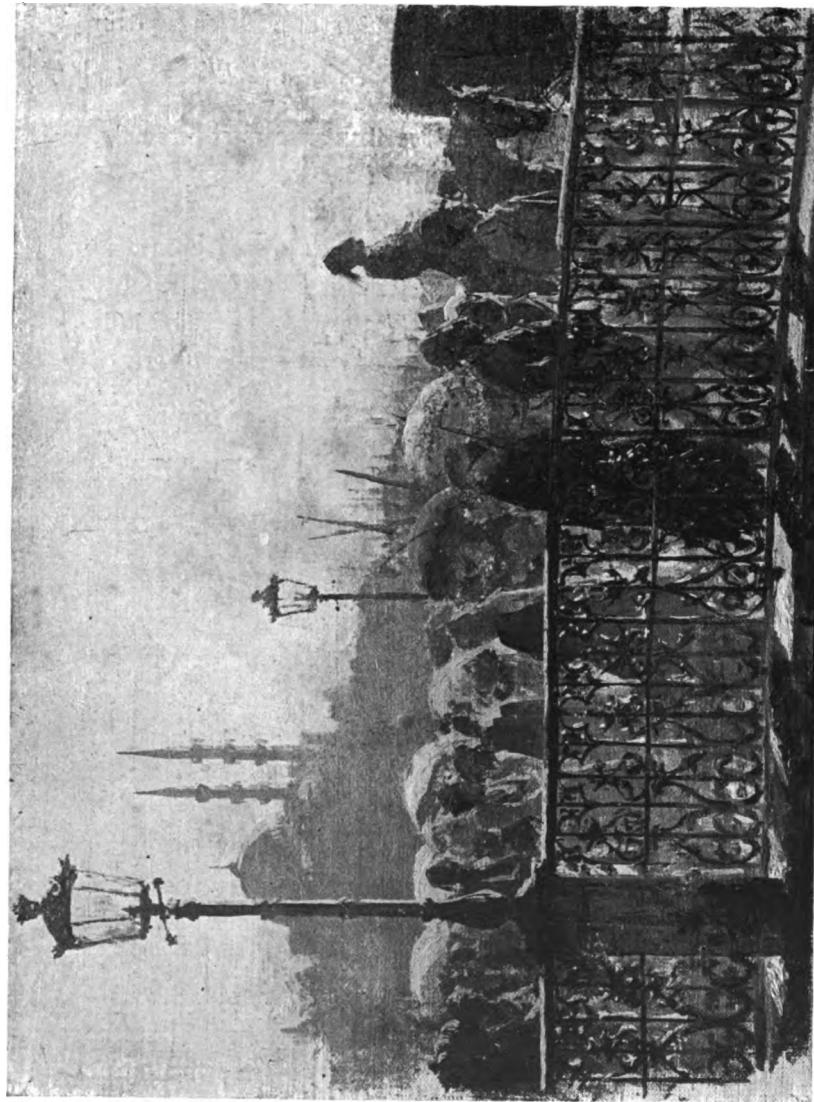
forcibly struck by the universal life, liveliness, and activity of the capital. There is no city in the world where so many different types of humanity meet and jostle each other and the stranger at every turn. Every nation in Europe is represented, and every nation of Asia as well. The highest and lowest types of living humanity pay their penny to the men in white who take the tolls on Galata Bridge. There is not even, as there is in so many cosmopolitan capitals, any general predominant type of feature or color. Of the Turks themselves it may be doubted whether they should be called a nation, or an agglomeration of individuals of many races who find one common bond in Islam. In the first mosque you enter at haphazard, you may see the pure Turk, often as fair and flaxen as any Norwegian, prostrating himself and repeating his prayers beside the blackest of black Africans. And as you enter the sacred place, both, at the self-same moment, will instinctively glance at your feet to see whether you have taken off your shoes or have slipped on a dusty pair of the "babuj" which will generally be offered you at the door. Among Mohammedans, as among Roman Catholics, the universality of common practices has something imposing in it, and you instinctively respect the Mohammedan for requiring you to reverence the spot on which he prays. And here at the very outset let me say, that after many visits and some residence in the East I am strongly inclined to believe in the original Turk—when he is to be found. Greeks, Armenians, Persians, and Africans have given him a bad name by calling themselves Turks and sometimes by misgoverning his country, but he himself is a fine fellow and belongs to the superior,



An Armenian.

dominant races of the world. He is naturally a fair man with blue eyes and of fresh complexion, well grown, uncommonly strong, and very enduring. He is sober; he is clean; and he is honest even to his own disadvantage, being by no means a match for the wily Greeks and Armenians who are perpetually fattening on his heart. There is a common proverb in the East to the effect that it takes ten Jews to cheat an Armenian, and ten Armenians to cheat one Persian. The pure Turk has no chance against such people—as little chance as they themselves would have, perhaps, against an average Hindu. That fact of itself explains the extraordinary mixture of races to be found in Constantinople. The Turk is easily cheated, and people congregate from all places in the world to profit by his simplicity. Anyone who will take the trouble to watch the streets and bazaars for any length of time, carefully bearing this point of view in mind, will be convinced of the truth of the assertion. The country produces little; its imports are not large; it is but a way-station on the sea-road between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. If the swarms of Greeks and Armenians, who infest almost every quarter, from the highest point of Pera to the remotest corners of Stamboul in the neighborhood of the Seven Towers and the Adrianople Gate, do not rob the Turk, upon what then do they live and fatten and grow rich?

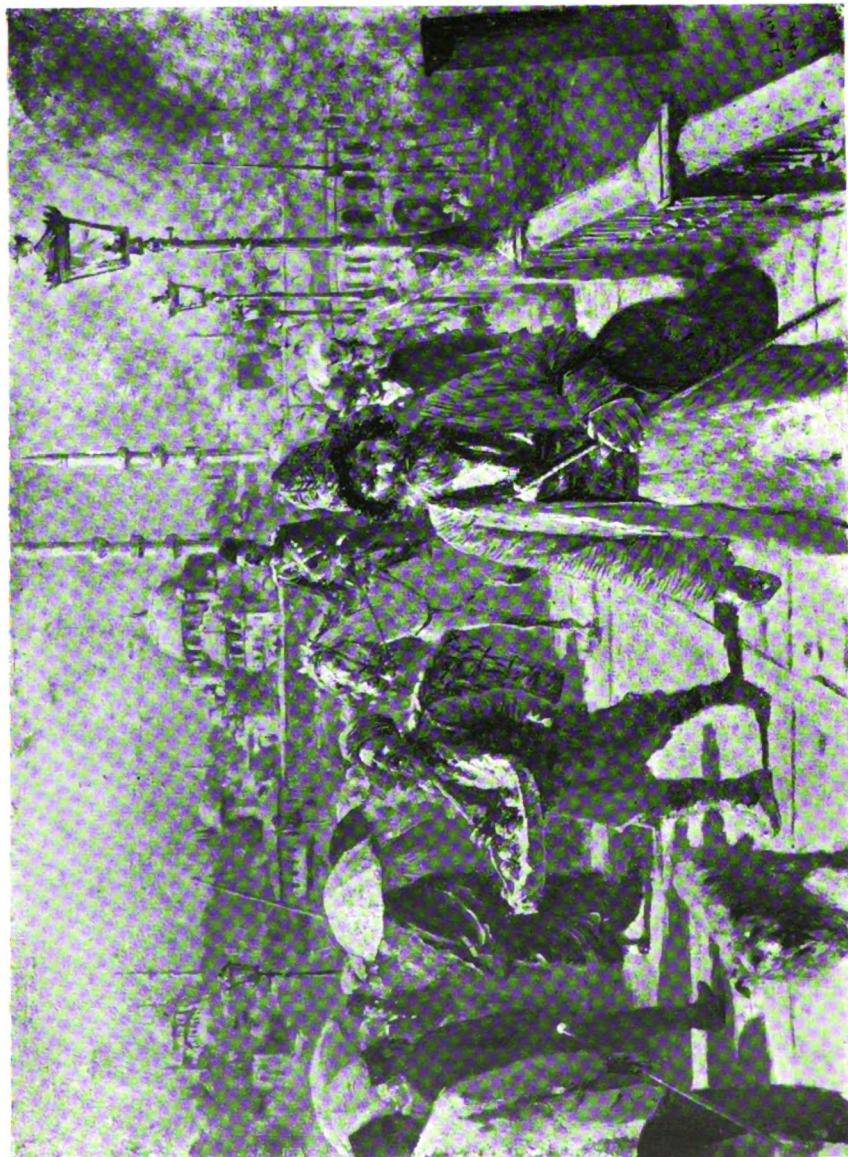
Have you ever met and known one of them who was not in pursuit of a “concession,” a “grant,” or the ragged end of a monopoly, and does not the Turk ultimately pay for all these things? Where are the foundries and the manufactories, the grain markets and the railways



Galata Bridge from the Café.

to support such an enormous number of men engaged in business?

There is more on Galata Bridge than appears at first sight. It is a sort of combination in itself of the Venetian Rialto and of the Florentine Ponte Vecchio. It is built on floating pontoons, having a draw in the middle which is only opened in the night, and it consists practically of three parts—a highway for foot-passengers and carriages, a narrow street of little shops and coffee-houses, and a series of steamboat piers. I have computed roughly that, taking the average of the year, twenty-eight thousand persons cross Galata Bridge every day, a calculation which includes, of course, all the passengers for the Scutari and the Bosphorus ferries who pay toll in order to reach the steamers. There is a quiet spot unknown to most Europeans, where one may sit for hours in undisturbed enjoyment of coffee and cigarettes, and watch the passengers on the bridge and the arrivals and departures at one of the piers, besides observing the manners and customs of the Galata Kaikjis and the Hamals who congregate at the landing east of the bridge on the Galata side. This delightful spot is the corner of the first coffee-house on the left going toward Stamboul. It has a large, airy, and perfectly clean room, with windows on three sides through which the wind blows perpetually even on the hottest days. Take your seat in the corner nearest the bridge and nearest to Galata, order your cup of coffee—“shekerli,” with sugar, or “sade” without—light your cigarette, and begin your observations. The scene is dazzling and kaleidoscopic in its variety of color and quick



Galata Bridge.

motion. The eye is first struck by the predominance of the fez. Hundreds of little truncated cones of vivid scarlet dart hither and thither, passing and repassing each other like a swarm of vermillion insects, all exactly alike and all at very nearly the same level. The fez was introduced as the official head-dress of Turkey by Mahmud II. known as the Reformer, who took it from the Greeks, and substituted it for the ponderous turban formerly worn in the army, and by all Government officials. It is in itself ugly except for its bright color, but it is neat, uniform, and clean, and with its long black silk tassel lends a sort of "dashing" look to the bronzed faces of officers and soldiers. But there are turbans, too, and, plenty of them, both white and green, and many of the poorer sort, such as porters, water-carriers, and sweetmeat sellers, twist a white or red rag round the fez to emphasize the fact that they are Mussulmans. The white and green turbans are distinctive of the Mollahs—men who have received the education of Mohammedan priests, though they may not necessarily exercise priestly functions. They, too, wear the Turkish dress, the flowing, tight-sleeved, scanty-cut gown of almost any color except red, open in front and disclosing the spotless shirt, the embroidered vest, the wide trousers, and the voluminous waistband. But European dress is the rule and not the exception. The military uniforms are close imitations of those in use in the German army, and the garments of the civilians are less perfect copies of what is considered fashionable in western Europe. The Mollah strides along with dignified step and graceful movement, conscious, no doubt, of the artistic superiority of his own clothes.



A Fruit Seller.

If he has a green turban he is a descendant of the Prophet's own family, which, like that promised to Abraham of old, has become like the sands of the sea. In the great majority of

cases, too, the claim to such high descent is genuine, the green badge being handed down from father to son without much possibility of its being assumed by one who has no claim to it, unless he be an emigrant from his own birthplace. The women of the family also wear some bit of green silk or other stuff in their own homes, though rarely in the street, unless it be hidden beneath the yashmak or the ferajeh—the clumsily cut overgarment which covers all women in the street from the throat to the inevitable patent leather shoes. But the yashmak is not what it was ten years ago, and has almost ceased to hide the face at all. Strict as the Sultan's ordinance is, there is not the slightest pretence of obeying it, and in the great majority of cases a thin white veil barely covers the forehead, and is but loosely drawn together under the chin. The cross-band which used to cover the nose above the eyes has entirely disappeared, or is worn only when ladies appear in public at such places as the Sweet Waters, or in their kaiks on the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. It must be admitted that with the disuse of that old-fashioned veil, a great illusion has disappeared from the streets of Constantinople. There was something very mysterious about it. Black eyes never looked so black and deep and liquid as when seen by themselves, as it were, between two broad bands of opaque white. In those days every yashmak veiled an ideal beauty, very different from the ugliness of the pale and flaccid features which its absence now generally discloses. One is inclined to doubt whether the mirror is in common use in the harem of to-day.

But as you sit by the open window of the coffee-house,

you have little time for analyzing the features or the dress of the hurrying crowd. What you see is a magnificent, inextricable confusion of moving light and sun and shade

and color, a wild and almost dream-like confusion of Eastern and Western life, a startling and almost horrible contrast of magnificence and squalor; the splendid, gold-lace-bedizened adjutant on his Arab mare and the almost inconceivably wretched beggar, maimed and blind, perhaps, holding out his hand with his perpetual feeble cry, "On para," a penny; the solemn scion of the Prophet's race, green-turbaned, stately, calm; the deadly pale indifferent



A Street Water-carrier.

Turkish woman all in white and black, and closely followed by a bright-eyed African girl even less closely veiled than her mistress ; the sanctimonious Dervish in soft brown, or softer green, or steely gray, his bent head and downcast eyes surrounded by his tall cylindrical felt cap ; the little strutting military cadet in smart uniform and brand-new fez, not more than twelve years old, perhaps, and closely followed by a scowling African servant who cuffs him sharply, without the slightest sign of respect, if he wanders to the right or to the left. Then, suddenly, the rumble and clatter of a splendid equipage rolling fast through the dividing crowd, bearing, it may be, some solemn, frock-coated, white-bearded, scarlet-fezzed minister of state, on his way to Selamlik, or from Yildiz Kiosk to the Sublime Porte—or else, if the carriage be a closed brougham, and if there be outriders, some delicate, pale-faced, half-consumptive prince, one of the innumerable offshoots of the Imperial family. And it all surges back and forth, gleaming, glistening, and flashing, under the broad white sun against the background of blue water and pale sky and faintly outlined hills, poured out as a stream of liquid metal when the furnace is opened, and rushing, iridescent and sparkling, toward the mould, fascinating, inthralling, almost hypnotic in its effect upon the senses.

Even the fat and flabby Greek, who sits not far from you upon the leather bench, can hardly keep his eyes from the sight, although it has been familiar to him since he was a baby. He is a cook and has bilious-looking eyes. You know that he is a cook, because he is smoking a water-pipe which, as everyone who frequents the coffee-houses in Constantinople is aware, is a form of enjoyment favored almost exclu-

sively by the members of his profession. But even the bubbling of the water-pipe, and the constant efforts of keeping its little fire alive, cannot distract your neighbor's unhealthy yellow eyes from the intralling spectacle of Galata Bridge at noon-day. There is nothing like it in the whole world, from San Francisco to Peking—nothing so vivid, so alive, so heterogeneous, so anomalous, and so fascinating. The imagination reels at the merest attempt to fix the characteristics or guess at the lives, to evoke the poetry, the prose, or the romance, of half a score among the countless individualities that cross the field of vision at every second, streaming backward and forward like swarms of bees between the two great hives of humanity thus linked and bound together by a single narrow causeway.

I shall never forget my first impression of Constantinople. It has been my good fortune since then, to see it again and again, at every time of year, and under every possible aspect, but no subsequent picture has had either the vividness or the beauty of the first. I remember that it was in February and we steamed up the Sea of Marmora to the entrance of the Bosphorus in a heavy snow-storm. The flakes fell so thick and fast that scarcely a single building was distinctly visible. Then, suddenly, just when we were opposite St. Sophia, the snow ceased to fall, the clouds parted in a bright blue rent, and the clear morning sun, rising behind us, shone full upon Stamboul. It was a marvellous sight. Every dome and minaret and tower was frosted with thick silver. It was as though the whole beautiful city were moulded in precious metal finely



A Water-Carrier.

chiselled and richly chased. The slender minarets shot up like rays of light, the dark cypresses were changed to silver plumes, even the Seven Towers, far on the western wall, were as white as Parian marble. Only the sea had color. A moment earlier it had been gray and dull as weather-beaten lead, but under the touch of the Eastern sun it flashed all at once to a deep opaque blue, more like lapis lazuli than sapphire.

The glory of the scene was beyond description, and, in its way, surpasses anything I have witnessed in any part of the world. A few minutes later it was gone, the wintry clouds rolled together, the light went out, snow fell again, then rain, and then more snow, and my second impression was of dismal, slushy, filthy streets, dripping eaves, marrow-biting air, and an intense longing for a comfortable room and a good fire. Perhaps the contrast has served in memory's gallery to throw the first picture into unreasonable prominence, but remembrance may have exaggerations which one does not regret.

And now, quite recently, I have seen the picture in another and very different light. I was belated in Kadi Keui on a summer evening, and being obliged to get back to Pera for the night I took a four-oared kaik. The moon was near the first quarter and shone brightly, though the weather to the northward was threatening, and there was a sharp, cool breeze over the water. Very slowly, as we made our way across, the black cloud-bank crept up to the moon until, just as we were opposite Top Kapu, the thunder-storm broke on us in full force. In an instant the night was as black as ink, and I could see nothing ahead but the dim lights of the bridge

and the white foam of the driving squall. Astern and to starboard the red light on the so-called Leander's Tower served to guide the oarsmen as they pulled along through the big drops of rain. Then the lightning began. At intervals of a few seconds, vivid flashes lit up both cities, Pera and Stamboul, so brightly that even at a great distance I could distinctly see the windows of the houses, the details of the architecture, and even the little low doors high up at the tops of the minarets. It was as though at each separate moment the whole city were enveloped in flames, instantly extinguished and as suddenly rekindled.

But perhaps the most characteristic view of all, and the most permanently abiding is that of Stamboul in summer when the strong, unwavering light fills every lane and alley and corner from sunrise to sunset, drinking up the shadows as heat dries moisture. Then behind the gilded gratings of Sultan Ahmed's lovely fountain the watermen are ever busy filling the little metal cups from the cool cistern for the thirsty faithful and faithless alike. Then, in the bright shade that is like the sunshine of other cities, the wretched street dogs forget to fight, and lie panting in the heat, trusting that each passer-by may be a merciful Turk, who will step aside rather than disturb them, and not a Greek or an Armenian, who will kick them half across the street rather than go a yard out of his way. Then it is pleasant to wander through the halls and passages of the Top Kapu Serai—in English, the “Cannon Gate Palace”—to spend half an hour in the exquisite little library dreaming over the marvellous portraits of the Sultans, if you are lucky enough to be trusted with the

precious parchment pages. Mehemet the Conqueror, Bayezid the Mystic, Suleiman the Magnificent, Ahmed First—he of the six minarets—Mahmud the Reformer, the Slayer of the Janissaries, the introducer of the fez—these and many others have all lived and moved and had their being within the walls of the great rambling old palace, men of many strange and divers passions and ambitions, some of them voluptuous in their tastes beyond a Roman Emperor's dream of luxury, others warlike, simple, and severe, some merciful, some blood-thirsty, all despotic in theory, in fact, or in both. Here are their portraits as they looked in their rich and varied magnificence, turbaned, jewelled, and armed, fierce-looking men most of them, even when there is a trace of effeminacy in their features, for the Sultan is not only the Padishah—The King of Kings—but also the Hunkyar, the “Man Slayer.” And at the entrance to the palace, between the gates, there is a dismal little room where the slaying used to be done, where many a Pasha, many a Vizier, and many a Minister of State has felt the tough bow-string quietly tightening round his throat, when a few moments earlier he had dreamed of favor and of power. Down by the water's edge, too, there is a little gate about which many stories are told, legendary, perhaps, and certainly not so surely true as the historical facts connected with the Jellad Odasi—the gloomy little room—under Orta Kapu. Tradition says that through that narrow water-gate more than one rebellious beauty of the harem was carried out, sewn in a weighted sack, that her soul might expiate her follies and her body feed the fish of the Bosphorus. If you have a Greek guide, he will assure you, with every

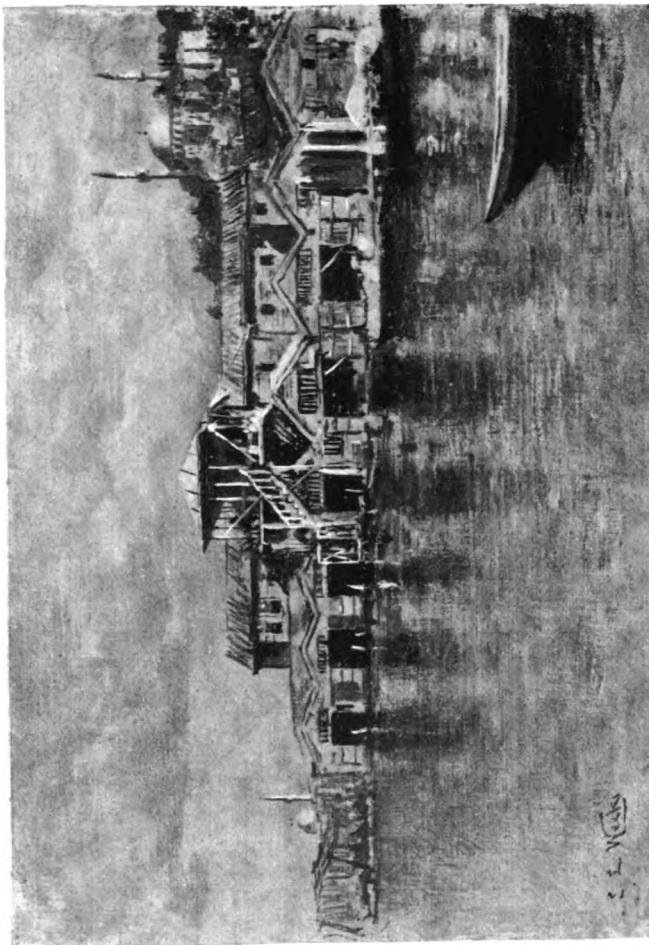
appearance of believing the story himself, that it was the custom of the earlier Sultans to torture rich Greeks into confessing the whereabouts of their hidden treasures, and then to consign their mangled remains to the sea by that same gate—a story which finds no corroboration whatever in the charters granted to Christians by the Sultans, and very little, if any, in history as told by the Christians themselves. But as for the ladies of the harem, we know very little about them, though their shadowy eyes and snowy yashmaks seem to pursue us in the still warm air through that vast deserted dwelling—and there are no portraits of them among the illuminated parchment leaves in the quiet library.

There is nothing dull or commonplace about shopping or shopkeeping in the East. Every man's shop is much more literally his stronghold than the Englishman's house is his castle, and every customer's appearance is the signal for a siege. The unconscionable length of time necessary to develop a bargain in Turkey accounts, perhaps, for the perpetual crowd in the bazaar. Whoever wishes to buy anything of which the price is not commonly known and fixed by custom, must return many times to the assault before he gets what he wants. The consequence is that where every customer comes four times instead of once to the shop where he has business, there are four times as many people in the tortuous passages and labyrinthine ways of the bazaar, as should legitimately correspond to the amount of business actually done. The process is certainly cumbrous. When you first see the object for which you are looking you must be blind,



More than one rebellious beauty of the harem was carried out, sewn in a weighted sack.

not let your features betray by the least expression that you are interested. Next, you should ask the price of at least one hundred articles in the shop, being careful, however, not to omit the one you need, lest the omission should make the shopkeeper suspect that you want it. You will then send for coffee and say that you have not come to buy anything, but have merely made inquiries out of curiosity. A few days later come, and again ask the prices of several things. On your third visit you may allow yourself to look more closely at what you have long since mentally selected, and to offer the shopkeeper not more than one-third of what he asks. On the fourth day prepare for a final pitched battle. If you do not look unrighteously rich and have not the appearance of being a "tender-foot," you may consider that you have done fairly well if you pay in the end about two-thirds of what was demanded, especially if you have dealt with a Turk or a Jew, avoiding anything like a Christian as you would shun the plague. But this roundabout process has compensations after all so real as to be almost attractions in themselves. Everything is mysterious in the bazaar and much is beautiful. A walled city within a walled city, and again an almost impregnable fortress within that, cut up in all directions by narrow passages, blind alleys and crossways, the whole being vaulted and roofed, and entirely lighted by countless little domes—a labyrinth Cretan in its complications, and puzzling even to those who inhabit it, crowded by a busy, jostling, motley multitude drawn together from all quarters of the globe, and filled in all its recesses to very overflowing with every production of Western civilization and Eastern art, per-

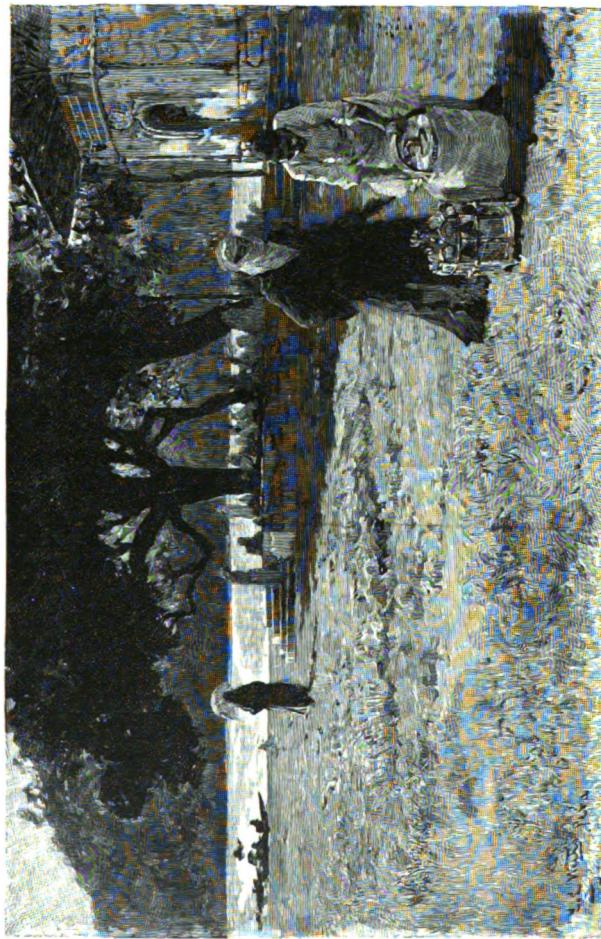


Boat-houses on the Golden Horn.

vaded throughout its enormous extent by the strange smell of the East, so dear to strangers and so hateful to the exiled European—rich in everything, in life and sound and gorgeous color—the “charshi” of Stamboul stands alone in the whole world as the product of three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa, fused at one busy, central, seething point.

The centre of centres, the safe deposit, the stronghold of the Constantinople merchant, is Bezestan the “Armorer’s market.” The wealth in this inner sanctum is said to be enormous—coin, precious stones, jewels of all sorts, silken carpets, rich embroideries, gold, weapons, and treasures of Oriental art of every sort, are deposited here in what must seem to an ordinary European a very casual way, in deal boxes more or less strengthened with iron and furnished with by no means burglar-proof locks. And yet nothing is ever stolen from Bezestan. It has heavy gates of its own; it is opened late and closed early, and the merchants and other depositors employ numerous watchmen by night and day, according to a system which is primeval in the East, and to which the West is rapidly approaching. After expending its ingenuity for centuries upon the construction of ingenious locks and bolts and bars, Europe is beginning to understand that approximate safety is only to be found in employing plenty of light and a reliable watchman.

It would be hopeless to attempt anything like a description of the merchandise and antiquities here accumulated for sale. Such a catalogue would fill a hundred volumes, in a place where hardly any two objects are alike. What strikes one is the enormous product of Eastern manual labor, its variety

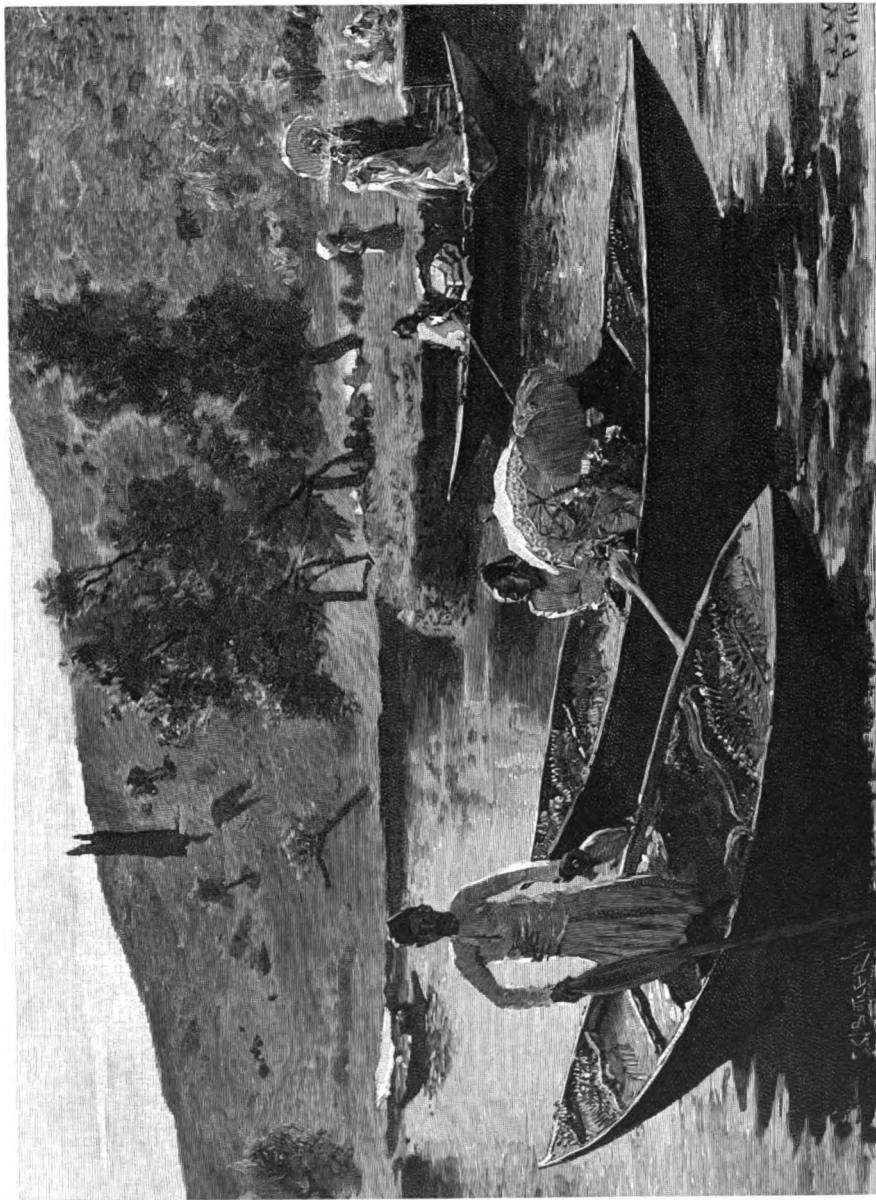


Sweet Waters of Asia.—Bosphorus.

and its artistic beauty, and those facts are more familiar in the West than they were twenty years ago, when no average cultivated person could tell by inspection whether a carpet were a Giordes or a Smyrna. But one is tempted to ask whether the world would not be richer and far more beautiful if the countless eyes that pore over "miserable books" and the innumerable fingers whose cherished occupation is to look as though they had none, were employed in producing something useful and yet not machine-made.

Constantinople owes much to the matchless beauty of the three waters which run together beneath its walls, and much of their reputation again has become world-wide by the kaik. It is disputed and disputable whether the Turks copied the Venetian gondola or whether the Venetians imitated the Turkish kaik, but the resemblance between them is so strong as to make it certain that they have a common origin. Take from the gondola the "felse," or hood, and the rostrated stem, and the remainder is practically the kaik. It is of all craft of its size the swiftest, the most easy to handle, and the most comfortable, and the Turks are generally admitted to be the best oarsmen in Europe. Indeed, they have need to be, for both the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn are crowded with craft of every kind, and made dangerous by the swiftest of currents. The distances too are very great, and such as no ordinary oarsman would undertake for pleasure or for the sake of exercise. It is no joke to pull fifteen or sixteen miles against a stream which in some places runs four or five knots an hour.

Sweet Waters of Europe.



The foreigner avoids the kaik when he is alone, because he cannot bargain, and because the only alternative is the society and unceasing chatter of the tormenting guide. But he loses much. It is well worth while to lie back among the cushions opposite the silent oarsmen with no companion but a cigarette, and to be pulled swiftly up the Golden Horn on a Friday afternoon in summer, choosing the hour so that the sun shall be behind the hill just as the kaik sweeps into the broad lagoon beyond the Arsenal. The river broadens and narrows suddenly again and again, streaked with light and shade, and the reflections of the soft green hills, shot with the ripples and wake of small light craft, dotted brilliantly with color, the bright red fez, the full and snowy shirt of the kaikja, the rich hues of dark velvets trailing over the stern of a private boat here and there among the rest. Now, as the water widens, there is room for all and they spread like a fan, hastening to be the first at the narrows beyond ; and then you are in the throng again, wondering at the boatmen's matchless skill and sometimes at their marvellous good temper. Then under pretty wooden bridges, between low river banks carpeted with turf. Trees grow in little thickset plantations, and in each tiny grove the coffee-seller has his small furnace of live coals, his water-jar and his array of spotless cups. There, in the deep, cool shade, whole families spend the afternoon at rest, the women and children seated together upon the grass, their ferajehs drawn closely round them and their yashmaks carelessly draped around their faces, while the men are grouped by themselves a little apart. As you near the Imperial villa trees grow more closely together and the people are more

numerous ; Egyptian fiddlers and flute-players fill the evening air with strange Arab melodies, often harsh, sometimes tuneful, but always melancholy. The people talk little among themselves, and everywhere the voice of the ice-cream vendor rises loudly above other sounds—dondurma kaimak—frozen cream ! A little higher the trees are larger still, the crowd is greater. Carriages of all sorts, from the most brilliant equipage to the humblest country cart, are drawn up in long rows. There are booths and tents—you may eat broiled mutton collops with sour cream, or simple ices, or you may drink sherbet and coffee, and everyone smokes the inevitable, the eternal, the universal cigarette.

And here by the Sweet Waters of Europe, in the pleasant shade and by the cool, flowing water, I will leave you for a space to breathe the gentle Eastern air, to dream out your dream of romance until the shadows deepen to purple, and the silent kaiks drop away down the stream, or if you feel commercially inclined, and have spent your day in the bazaar, to lay deep schemes for the circumvention of Isaac, or Moses, or my dear old friend Marchetto, or of Osman Bey, the honest Turk, in the purchase of the ideal Persian carpet.

II

BEYOND the limits of the business quarter and the neighborhood of the public offices and ministerial buildings, Constantinople is one of the quietest cities in the world. The Turk's home life seems mysterious to the European, though there is much less real secrecy about it than might be supposed. In the East, as elsewhere, the house-servants gather together, gossip, and tell each other what their masters have for dinner, how often their mistresses dye their hair with henna, lose their tempers, and get into debt in the bazaar. But though all these things go on, as they do wherever human beings are gathered together, the closed doors and latticed



On a Steamer—Golden Horn.

windows of the long narrow streets present an impenetrable front. As one leaves the centre of business, going westward, there are fewer women to be seen, and the veils, strange to say, are more closely drawn about the face. The great Turkish quarter stretches through the midst of the city in the direction of the Adrianople Gate and the Kahriye Mosque. The houses are mostly but two stories high, and in every stage of preservation. A solid brick or stone dwelling with projecting balconies, dazzlingly whitewashed and immaculate as to its doorstep, is followed by a tumble-down wooden cottage so distorted by the yielding of its timbers in all directions as to disturb an ordinary man's theories of possible stability. Next, perhaps, comes a low, open shed, kept by a cobbler, a small tailor, or a coffee-seller. Beyond that, the rusty grating of a public fountain or a tiny burial-ground not five yards square, the tall, weather-beaten head-stones leaning and lying in all directions like jack-straws. Then more dwellings, straight or crooked, a little mosque, another coffee-shop, a cross street and two or three sturdy horses held by skinny boys to be hired as cabs are in other cities. And so on, through many varieties of the same view, over the execrable pavement, up and down hill, until you reach the neighborhood of the walls, along which a considerable part of the land rises abruptly like an embankment to the level of the gates and the open fields without.

Everyone who goes to Constantinople visits the Kahriye Mosque, once known in Greek as the "Country Hermitage," a small but very ancient church, richly adorned with paintings and mosaics. The Mollah in charge is an enlightened Turk



A Glimpse of St. Sophia.

of the purest breed, with yellow hair, blue eyes, and fresh complexion—and a descendant of the Prophet, too, for he wears a green turban. He also speaks a little French, and is quite as much interested in the archæology of his mosque as you can be. It is in a great measure due to him that so much whitewash has been removed from its walls, and that the building itself is kept constantly in repair.

At the top of the aforesaid embankment there is a little coffee-house just built, and commanding a view of the city very different from most others. One is surprised by the totally new aspect of Constantinople as seen from this side; whereas from the Bosphorus one sees little except the architectural outlines of the mosques, interspersed here and there with a little green, or shadowed by the tall plumes of dark cypresses: from this end of the city there appear to be on the whole more trees than houses. The fresh verdure crops up everywhere amid brown roofs. Below and on the left there is a glimpse of the Golden Horn. At your feet, in the hollow, lies the famous little mosque with its three cypresses, and the great buildings about the Seraskierat and St. Sophia are but shadowy outlines in the hazy distance.

This part of the city is thinly populated, and it has an almost desolate look. As the ground rises, the houses are fewer, and there are many irregular open spaces, covered with thin grass in spring, deep in dust in summer, and in winter deeper still with mud. And all along this side, from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmora, runs the great barrier of turreted walls which baffled Eyub, who lies buried where he fell, and which at the end made such long and brave resist-

ance to Mehemet the Conqueror. Nearest the sea lies the fortress he built, Yedi Kule, the Seven Towers. The vast ruin with its great court, its numerous towers and gates and ramparts, has become in the course of events the habitation of a nondescript Armenian cobbler.



View from Eyub Looking Over the Golden Horn.

After having been successively the stronghold of the city, and the prison in which, by a rather liberal interpretation of the law of nations, the Sultans confined the Ambassadors of the countries against which they declared war

—it was afterward used as a school and is now a mere ruin. The last time I was there I was wandering idly through the outer gate intending, as usual, to peer between the stones into the so-called Well of Blood, into which the aforesaid Armenian cobbler declares that the heads of a number of Janissaries were thrown when Mahmud the Reformer destroyed the corps. The well is deep and black, and there is water in it, and probably no bones at all by this time. In passing through the gate I stumbled against a stone which lay

in the way under the arch. It was a bit of the head-stone of a woman's grave, as was clear from the carved sunflower, for men's graves have a turban or a fez, according to the epoch. Below the flower a part of the inscription was still legible—the dedication to God, "the ever abiding One"—and below that, in Turkish, the words: "I have come to the garden of this world, but have found no kindness." More had followed, but the stone was broken off at that place. There was an odd pathos and pity about it, as though the unhappy woman, whoever she had been, buried long ago outside the walls, had come back, knocking once more at the gate of the "garden of this world," asking for a little of that kindness of which she had found none in life. It was all very lonely and desolate, the high sun beating down upon the withered shrubs and bushes and dusty paths of the garden which had once flowered in the court, and blazing more fiercely still upon the deserted hillock, the ruined mosque, and the mouth of the Well of Blood outside the open gate, and there, in the shadow of the arch between, the ghost of the Turkish woman asking for kindness and finding none.

In order to form any idea of the extent of the fortress one should climb at least one of the towers, though the view from the ramparts hardly repays the trouble. But the towers themselves are vast and gloomy places, some of them filled with wooden lofts, to be reached only by movable ladders, and formerly used as sleeping-places for soldiers. The winding stone stairs are so dark that the Armenian cobbler brings a lantern to show you the way. There were prisons below and prisons high up, prisons with windows and prisons with-

out. The last French ambassador who was locked up here, when war was declared between Turkey and France in 1798, was Ruffin, and the room which is shown as his is dimly lighted by a single grated window, less than two feet square, and at such a height from the floor that only a tall man can look out through it. It must be confessed that there was something imposing in the simple and straightforward disregard of the law of nations shown in imprisoning the ambassadors of foreign powers. Upon the tiled roofs of the towers the wind-blown dust has accumulated in the course of half a century or more, and the shrubs and bushes flourish abundantly. The cobbler says that the ghosts of the executed excellencies whose heads were formerly set up on the edge of the ramparts, as they were on Temple Bar, wander at night in this hanging garden.

As in most Oriental cities, there are two distinct modes of existence in Constantinople—the out-door life and the in-door life. The majority of Turks leave their homes in the morning and return late in the afternoon when their work is done. During the day they live out-of-doors or in the bazaars, but so soon as the Turk has completed his business he goes home, and if you ask for him you will be told that he is in the harem and not to be disturbed ; and, as a rule, his servants will refuse even to inform him of your presence. If it is indispensable that you should see him, you may await his pleasure in the selamlik, the room for receiving male guests, which is to be found in every Turkish house, and beyond which are the mysterious regions of the harem. “ Harem,” in the mod-

ern acceptation of the word, merely means the private apartments, and these would be called by the same name even in a bachelors' establishment inhabited solely by men, but generally it is applied to every place intended for women. The end of the Turkish railway carriage, curtained off from the rest, is harem ; so is the ladies' cabin on board ship, and the latticed gallery in a mosque. In the dwelling-house it is all that quarter inhabited by the wife and children and other ladies of the family ; and here I may say, in passing, that very few Turks nowadays have more than one wife, though the Koran allows every man four at a time, and encourages a constant change by facilitating divorce. The traditional Turk with his innumerable women no longer exists, except as a very rare exception, but the Mussulman has not sacrificed the advantages of the privacy granted him by the Mohammedan law and custom. Whatever exists or goes on behind the doors leading out of the selamlik belongs to his private life, and no one with any knowledge of Eastern manners would think of even suggesting the existence of women in the house. His life when away from home during the day is passed exclusively among men, and he does not even like to be seen in the company of any female member of his household. I have once or twice seen a Turk driving with a veiled lady, far in the country on the Asian side, but never in Stamboul. During the busy hours of the day the Turk lives out-of-doors, in the streets, under the trees in the open squares, and in the shops of the bazaar eating, drinking, taking his coffee, and smoking, wherever it best suits his convenience. The consequence is that the busy part of the city is full of eating-houses



Street Fountain at Stamboul.

and coffee-shops, and there is no end to the itinerant venders of food and drink who carry their wicker stands up and down in the crowd. There is the man who sells bread and “ pidè ” and “ peksemit ”—unleavened bread and biscuits ; there is the cheese-monger who has a round wicker basket and one or two kinds of cheese and “ yoord,” or Turkish curds ; there is the cook who sells kebab—little morsels of lamb or mutton broiled on wooden skewers, and pilaf, kept hot in a big closed tin, or stuffed spring squashes and other vegetables ; not to mention the sweet-meat-sellers, the custard-makers, and the sellers of sherbet. Most numerous of all are the water-carriers. They generally have a cylindrical vessel strapped on their shoulders and closely covered with green boughs to protect the water from the sun ; in one hand they hold the end of a flexible tube with a polished brass faucet, and in the other they carry two or three heavy glasses, with which, by a skilful movement of the fingers, they play a perpetual tune which gives notice of their whereabouts. Coming from Italy one is forcibly struck by the extreme cleanliness of all these peddlers of food and drink, and by the highly appetizing appearance of what they have to sell. But besides these, there are a certain number of kitchens and restaurants in the bazaar. In particular, there is a fat and rosy Turk who makes the best kebab in the world, and whose little place is in a small court close to one of the thoroughfares. On the clean marble slab which forms the sill of the window, the rows of wooden skewers lie ready for use, pilaf heaped up in large dishes steams by the well-kept fire, and a couple of clean, handy boys wait upon the customers, who sit at a little table at the

back of the kitchen or out of doors in the quiet court before it. The composition of the favorite dish must sound extraordinary to European ears.

“Pide,” or unleavened bread, is cut into squares and laid in the bottom of a soup-plate. Upon this curded cream is poured to the thickness of two fingers. Upon this, again, little squares of meat hot from the fire are heaped up, and the whole is seasoned with salt, pepper, cardamom, and sumach. It is exceedingly good and, what is more, very



Ice-cream Seller.

digestible, as those travellers will know who have been accustomed in Russia to eating sour cream with everything. Nor is the pilaf to be despised, though it would take long to describe the proper mode of preparing it, and to explain the differences between the four great pilafs of the world —the Turkish, the Greek, the Persian, and the East Indian, of which the Persian is, in my opinion, by far the best. The cook provides you with food, but not with drink, and if you require the latter you must hail the passing waterman and buy a glass of water or sherbet. Civilization, however, is far advanced in Constantinople, where every customer expects a knife and fork with his food, and uses them both. In Persia he would be given a piece of unleavened cake, which he would have to supplement with his fingers. For my own part, it has always struck me that fingers should be considered as much more appropriate instruments for feeding than forks. I know that they are my own fingers and that I have washed them, but as for the forks in places of public entertainment, I am not sure that they have been washed at all, and I would much rather not think of the way in which they have been used. We would rather suffer much than use another man's toothbrush, but we think nothing at all of using the whole world's fork—a fact which proves the vanity of most outward refinements.

But everything which the Turk consumes in the Bazaar is in the nature of luncheon, his principal meal being always taken at home and after sunset. In a dark corner of Bezes-tan there stands a little mosque with a small minaret, of which the pointed spire springs up like that of a toy house toward

the high vault of the roof overhead. At midday, as at the other hours of prayer while the Bazaar is open, the muezzin climbs the tall tower and calls the faithful from the window above with as much zeal as though he were crying the summons from the highest pinnacle of Sultan Ahmed. But though it be midday there is no general movement among the crowd, as there would be in Southern Christian countries at the dinner hour. For the Turk, when away from home, is nomadic and indifferent to regular meals, whereas the evening dinner or supper at home is a patriarchal institution treated with due importance and solemnity. There are Turkish families still in which a table is set in the selamlik, and is literally open every day to all comers, rich and poor. Anyone may enter, and he will be shown to a place at the master's table if he be of the master's class, or at another, lower down the hall, if he be an inferior. And in Turkey, to dine means also to spend the night, the entertainer being expected to furnish his guests with beds, slippers, and sleeping garments. Of course the ladies of the establishment do not appear, but are served separately in the harem. The chief butler of a friend of mine was recently heard to complain bitterly that the guests often rose very early in the morning and carried away the shirts and slippers provided them for the night—a poor return for such open-handed hospitality. It must be said that Turkish dinners do not as a rule last a long time. They consist indeed of a very great number of dishes, but these are offered but once to each guest and removed with incredible rapidity by the servants.

The street which runs from the Post-office to Nur-i-Os-



Street Scene in Stamboul—Café Frequented by Greeks.

maniye is one of the most characteristic of Constantinople, for it forms the principal thoroughfare between Galata Bridge and the Bazaar. It is a nondescript and cosmopolitan street, crowded with shops and offices of every trade and every nation. It is a favorite neighborhood for Greek and Armenian dentists, the assurances of whose skill are expressed in enormous signs. There too, in the neighborhood of the Post-office itself, the public scribes sit all day long in the shade, grave and impassive as sphinxes, and ready to lend their skill with the pen for the correspondence of the unlettered. Their customers are chiefly Turkish women, who generally veil themselves more closely than usual while dictating in low and confidential tones the messages they themselves are unable to write. The system is familiar enough in Italy and Greece, as well as in most Eastern countries ; but it is worth while to linger a moment and catch a glimpse of some of those faces as they bend eagerly over the scribe's table, watching the swiftly moving reed pen. For Turkish is written with reeds, and the inkstand is a little sponge. Near this spot is the Yeni Jami, one of the beautiful mosques of Stamboul, frequented at all hours by a motley crowd of worshippers. Leave behind you the glare, the hurry, and the rush of the thronged street, thrust your feet into the wide slippers at the door, and enter the beautiful building at the hour of prayer. The contrast is sudden, solemn, and grand, and something of the deep mystery of Oriental life is all at once made clear to you. In the cool shadows Mussulmans of all ages are prostrating themselves before the Mihrab—the small shrine which in every mosque shows the exact direction of Mecca—or before

the sacred writings in other parts of the wall. There is profound belief and devotion in their attitudes, gestures, and accents, a belief as superior to the idolatrous superstition of the far East as it is beyond the conviction of the ordinary Christian in simplicity and sincerity. It is indeed impossible to spend much time among Mussulmans without acquiring the certainty that they are profoundly in earnest in religious matters, and that the unfurling of the Standard of the Prophet which is occasionally hinted at as a vague possibility, would be productive of results not dreamed of in the philosophy of Europe.

Of all places in the world, Constantinople is interesting by the strong contrasts which it presents at every turn, and this sudden change from the brilliant animation of the streets to the solemn quiet of the mosques and tombs is one of the most striking. The marvellous richness of decoration in the interior of many of the Jamis brings to the surface the deeper side of Oriental character. As in most Eastern countries, some of the highest developments of art are brought into close contact with the most tasteless constructions and hideous ornaments. The magnificence, in virtue of which the epithet gorgeous is so frequently applied to the East, is often thrown into even stronger relief by the proximity of a certain squalid tawdriness extremely offensive to European taste. But here, as in Europe, the arts are intimately dependent upon religion and upon religious ideas. The Mussulmans of the Sunnite sect, who do not permit the representation of anything that has breath, have devoted an amount of attention to the art of writing equal to that which has been bestowed upon

painting in the West. To the cultured Turk a piece of beautiful caligraphy affords as much artistic delight as we could find in the pictures of the greatest masters. The European may in time familiarize himself with the Arabic character—which is a sort of shorthand—so as to read it as readily as the Latin or the Gothic. But he can never, I believe, learn to distinguish the artistic values therein which correspond to our ideas of drawing, color, light, and shade. A Turk the other day pointed out to me a text from the Koran which hung upon his wall written in plain black upon a white ground. “That writing,” he said, “gives me as much æsthetic pleasure as you could find in any Titian.” Such specimens of caligraphic skill are often richly framed and preserved under glass, but some of the most beautiful of them all are found in the glazed tiles used in ornamenting the mosques and tombs. Some of these inscriptions are positively priceless in the eyes of the Turks, and they are rapidly becoming so in the eyes of the European collector, who, however, finds it almost impossible to obtain the smallest specimen of them. For it is always in connection with religion, and generally in places of worship, that the best objects are found. But art in the East is rapidly decaying, and the secret of producing the wonderful tiles, of which so many thousands are still to be seen, is lost forever, while the manufacture of cheap and inferior imitations is altogether in the hands of the Jews in the Bazaar.

In all legends and traditions of the East, the Arab horse plays an important part, and when I first visited the horse

market in Stamboul, I had anticipatory visions of thoroughbreds which would have delighted the hearts of Lady Anne Blunt and her husband. The disappointment was as complete as any I have ever suffered. The At-Bazaar is on the east side of the mosque of Mehemet II. the Conqueror. It would have been impossible to choose a worse place for the purpose of showing off horses, were there any to be shown, than the three-cornered open space, irregularly paved with cobble-stones of all sizes, on the steep incline of a little hill. This yard is surrounded by a number of wretched wooden houses, most of which contain a dark and ill-ventilated stable, where the few horses for sale by the various owners are kept—and ill-kept—in ordinary stalls. Two or three unwieldy Hungarian brutes and a dozen or so of stout little Saloniki cobs are the usual occupants, and I once found amongst them a monstrous form of horse-flesh which recalled the legends of Hereward's ugly mare and of the animal which the devil lent the exciseman in the “Ingoldsby Legends.” As to his legs, he was fully eighteen hands high, but his body was no longer than that of one of the aforesaid Saloniki ponies. His head reminded me of nothing so much as of a certain ancient leathern hat-box, a sort of heirloom in my possession, weather-beaten under many skies and jaded in many express trains, hallmarked all over with a whole geographical dictionary of names of cities printed on scraps of paper of every possible hue. There was something so strangely unnatural about the animal's whole appearance that my attention was riveted by him for many minutes, and my guide, the splendid old Turk who is the chief of the horse-dealers, looked at me curiously



Court of the Mosque of Sultan Bâyezid.

as though suspecting that I meant to buy him. I was shown one animal, at last, well worth seeing and buying. He was led out from the depths of a gloomy den, which would have asphyxiated a Western horse, and received a very perfunctory grooming at the hands of one of the stable-men. But a more perfect Arab it would be hard to find out of Arabia. There were all the points I had dreamed of before visiting the At-Bazaar—the straight tapering legs, the small feet, the rather large and bony head, the tiny, sharp-pricking ears, and the fine silken coat of golden bay. He shook himself, and snorted with evident disgust at his quarters, as he was led out into the bright air, a king among beggars, a hero among sculions—and at least a fragment of my lost illusion was forthwith restored.

But there are few such creatures to be seen in Constantinople, though the law against exporting horses from the limits of the Ottoman Empire is so stringent that not even those highest in power would venture to transgress it. It is more easily enforced, too, than the regulation which forbids the taking away of any object whatsoever upon which are written or printed words from the sacred writings.

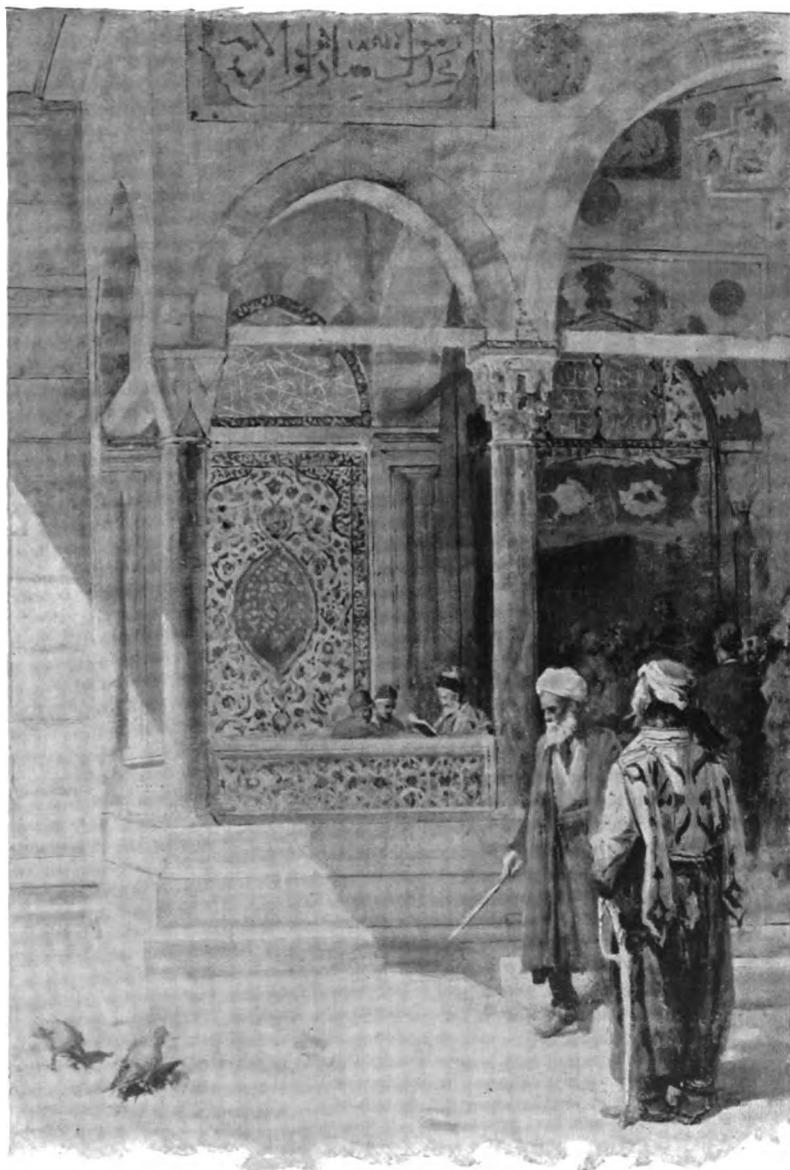
In connection with the horse market I am reminded of the Saddler's Bazaar, a small quarter by itself adjoining one of the principal streets of Stamboul, the Divan Yol. The making of saddles and harnesses, and, generally speaking, the art of working leather, was formerly in high repute in a country throughout which horses, camels, and other beasts of burden were the only means of locomotion. The rich bestowed the greatest possible attention upon the trappings and equipments of

the animals they used, and the workmen who produced these objects constituted a special guild. This art, like almost all others in Turkey, has greatly degenerated of late years, but certain things are still made better here than elsewhere. The Saddler's Bazaar contains, I should think, about a hundred and fifty shops, low, shed-like buildings in which the occupants sit upon little wooden platforms just above the level of the street, with narrow verandas in front of them in which, during the daytime, the finished wares are hung up for sale. A great many things are made of so-called Russian leather, which is not more Russian than it is generally Eastern, and of which the peculiar smell is due to the process of curing by the smoke of leaves instead of by the ordinary process of tanning. Here may be seen elaborate saddles, covered with leather or stuffs or velvet, of the sort used by rich Turks in the country, though long out of fashion in the capital, and matched with cumbersome bridles decorated with ornamental hand-sewing. Saddle-bags are made here, too, of all descriptions, shapes, and sizes, simple and ingenious and useful for the long journeys on horseback into Asia which are often undertaken from Constantinople. But the best articles in the market are the mule-trunks of heavy Russian leather, admirably worked and nothing like which is to be found in Europe.

There is no regulation in Turkey, I believe, against the burial of the dead within the walls of the city, but the prejudice against the disturbing of a grave is so strong that a vast amount of space is necessary for cemeteries. Besides innumerable tombs and many small burial-grounds in the neigh-

borhood of the mosques within Stamboul, Pera, Stamboul itself and Scutari are all bounded on the land side by an almost continuous chain of grave-yards.

Adjoining each mosque, as a general rule, is built the turbeh, or tomb, of the founder and of his wives and children. Most of these buildings are polygonal and in many cases octagonal, the eight sides corresponding with the names of Allah, Mohammed, and the six Imams. They are the most richly and beautifully decorated buildings in the city, and it is in them that the most valuable specimens of writing on tiles are to be found. The bodies of the dead are, according to Mohammedan custom, laid in the earth at a depth equal to the average height of a man, the grave of the Sultan or founder of the mosque being always opposite the door, and those of his wives and children disposed around his in symmetrical order. Over each grave is built up a wooden coffin or catafalque, of which the size corresponds with the importance of the occupant, the largest in Stamboul being that of Mehemet II. These coffins are covered with black velvet palls, very richly embroidered with silver and sometimes also with costly shawls, all of which have been to Mecca and have lain upon the tomb of the Prophet before being finally placed in the position they now occupy. One of the most curious of all the turbehs is that of Selim—if I am not mistaken—a Sultan who lies surrounded by his four wives and by no less than forty children, boys and girls, all of whom died in infancy. A little white turban distinguishes the graves of the boys from those of the girls. In each of the greater turbehs, in a silver box, is preserved one of the countless hairs of the



Tomb of One of the Sultans in the Court of St. Sophia.

Prophet's beard, and a railing surrounds the graves, which in some cases is of solid silver. These buildings are treated as mosques, and the matted floors must not be defiled by feet which have touched the street without. At the head of the principal catafalque there are generally three or four folding book-rests of magnificent workmanship, supporting splendidly illuminated Korans, from which the mollah in charge reads chapters at stated times in the day. Some of these illuminations surpass in exquisite detail of finish and color anything to be seen in Europe, and the finest pages of the most famous mediæval missals would look coarse beside them.

Besides the turbehs, there are small burial-grounds attached to many of the mosques, picturesque little places filled with diminutive graves and irregular tomb-stones, and thickly overgrown with shrubs and rose-bushes. It is not the custom in Turkey to keep graves in repair, and the monumental stones, being tall and slender and generally cylindrical, soon fall out of the perpendicular, leaning in every direction and lending the cemeteries a wild and fantastic appearance. Until Mahmud introduced the fez, the headstones of men's graves were surmounted by carved representations of turbans, but since that time the fez is in universal use, painted scarlet when new, with a blue tassel. Upon the column below the cylinder there is frequently a long inscription, beginning with an invocation to God or a verse from the Koran, and followed by a short account of the dead man's life. The tomb-stones of women either bear no symbol at all, or, as in the great majority of cases, are surmounted by a sunflower or something in the nature of an arabesque or plant. The inscriptions on them are

almost invariably in verse. In very rare instances persons of great importance have very elaborate monuments, which are

usually ugly in proportion as they are intended to be beautiful, and like the others are allowed to fall to ruin. In most of these small cemeteries there are narrow, well-kept walks at a lower level than the graves themselves, and contrasting oddly with the wild growth of trees and shrubbery on each side. Persons reputed to have led holy lives are often buried, especially in the country, in solitary graves surrounded by elaborate gratings and covered by



The Cemetery.

roofs or domes, and it is not uncommon to see them brightly illuminated at night with votive lamps, like the tombs of saints in Catholic countries. For Mohammedans not only reverence the memory of the dead, but believe in the effi-



Old Towers Outside the Walls of Stamboul.

cacy of their prayers and intercessions. It is a common thing, too, to see the shrubs about the graves of sainted personages covered with hundreds and even thousands of scraps of rag, torn by pilgrims from their garments and stuck on the bushes in the belief that the offering will preserve the individual from sickness.

But the most picturesque and wild of all the places of burial are the great cemeteries without the walls. Magnificent cypresses of almost fabulous age overshadow the vast area occupied by the bodies of the faithful, casting a deep and gloomy shade even in midday in summer; and there is little or no undergrowth here, for the cypress does not favor other plants. As far as the eye can reach in every direction, there is an interminable confusion of gray tombstones, standing, slanting, and lying in every possible position which a straight object can assume. Here and there at wide intervals a spot of bright color is visible, where the fez on a man's tombstone has not yet lost its color under the weather. The place is gloomy at midday, uncanny in the twilight, and ghostly at night. It is no wonder that the Turks should believe in ghosts, ghouls, vampires, and every conceivable posthumous horror. The belief in these things constitutes one of the most deep-rooted of popular Turkish superstitions, and the fatalistic Mussulman, who would readily face death in any shape, would tremble like a child if obliged to pass through a cemetery at night. As a matter of fact the burial-grounds are by no means safe places, especially after dark, for this very superstition makes them a very secure refuge for deserters and malefactors.

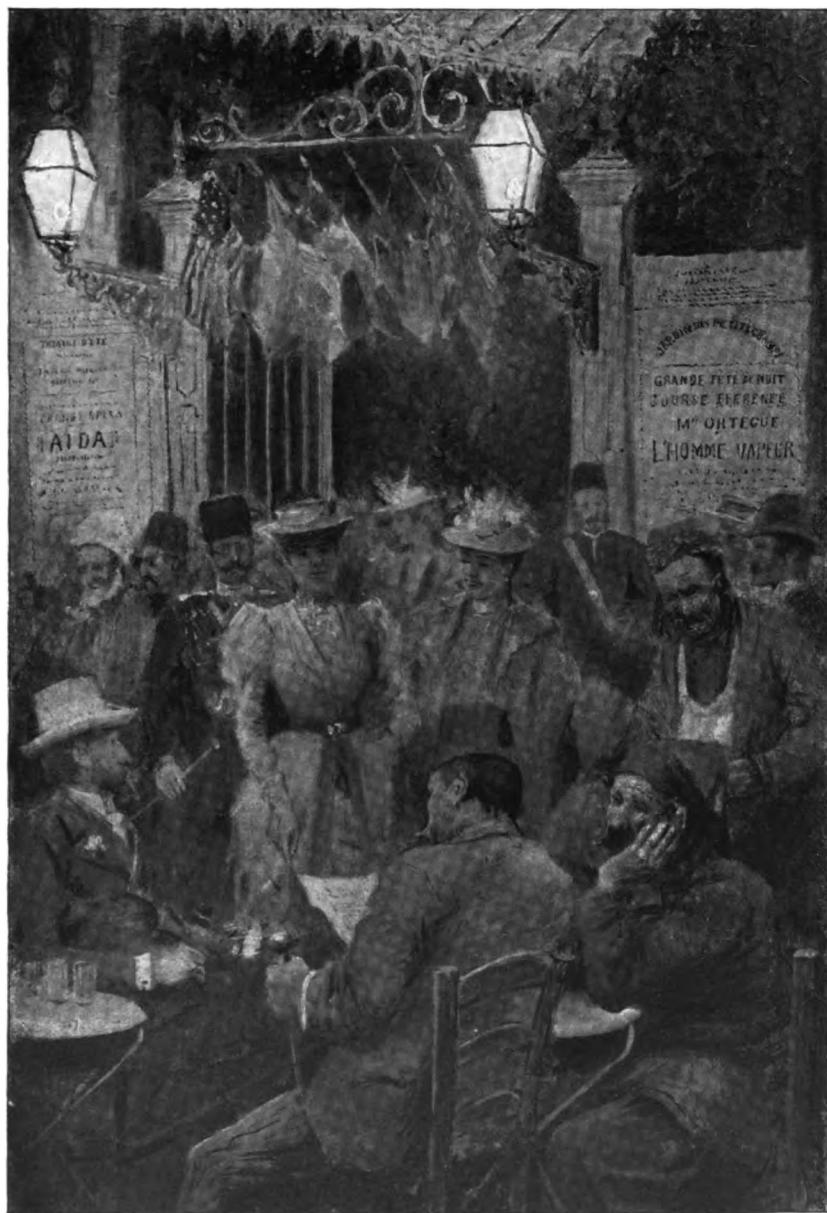
But in spite of their wild and gloomy aspect and ruinous condition, or perhaps in consequence of this state of things,



the Turkish cemetery is infinitely more picturesque than the Christian churchyard, with its abominably tasteless monu-

ments, its trim salad-like flower beds, and its insipid inscriptions—as superior in interest to an intelligent being as the primæval forest is to the creations of a landscape gardener. Modern religious art seems to be bad because it has kept pace with modern fashion, an error of which the Mussulman cannot be accused. There is something incongruous in treating dead men like books, to be arranged in neat order and catalogued as volumes are in a library. No one who clings to old-fashioned ideas can conceive of finding rest in such a neat and business-like establishment as a modern Christian cemetery. Since we do not believe in the worship of ancestors, as the Chinese do, and since those of us who believe in a future state are convinced that rest and reward or unrest and punishment are for the soul and not for the body, it seems both foolish and wicked to expend enormous sums for the preservation of what is by the hypothesis utterly worthless. Better to lie on the mountain-side under the sky, or to be dropped into the sea with a weight at one's feet, or at least to be put quietly away without expense—or even to occupy a nameless grave under the Turkish cypresses, than to be the prey of the modern undertaker, sexton, marble-cutter, and municipality. But, after all, though death be a matter of necessity, burial will always be a matter of taste.

I have hitherto said little about Pera, Galata, and the thickly populated suburbs on the northern side of the Golden Horn. The ancient city of the Genoese never formed a part of Constantinople, and will never be really incorporated with the Turkish capital. It is true that the Sultan now lives in Yildiz Kiosk, above the farther end of Beshik Tash, the “cradle

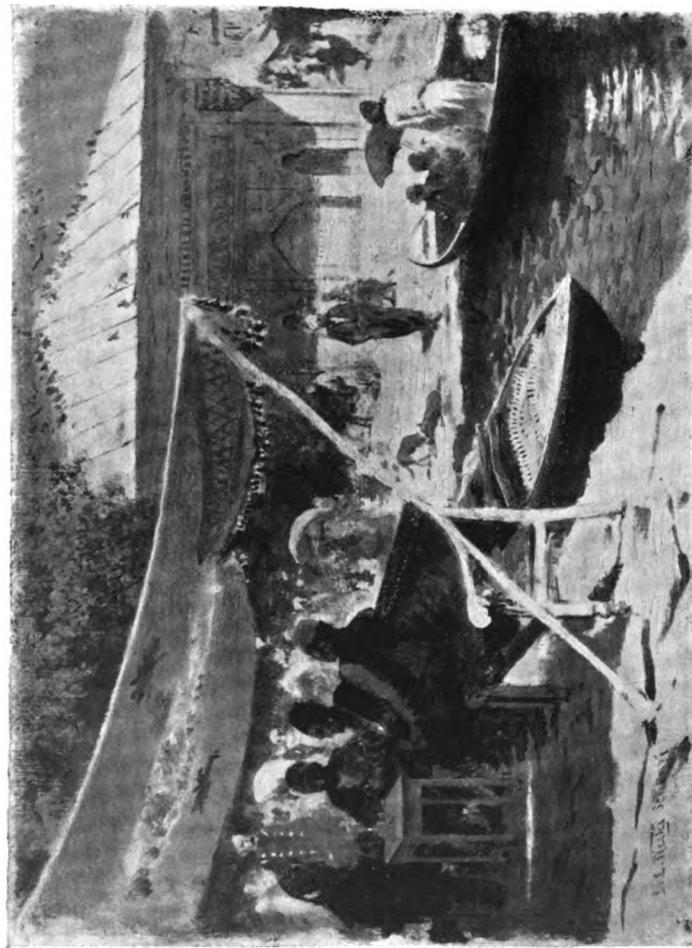


Entrance to the Municipal Garden at Pera—After the Concert—Twilight.

stone," on the Bosphorus, and the presence of the sovereign has naturally attracted a great number of high officials to the neighborhood. But Pera and Galata are chiefly inhabited by Christians and Jews, many of them being Europeans, and the aspect of the streets is consequently far less Oriental and less interesting. Pera, as everyone knows, is the aristocratic quarter, in which the European Embassies have their residences in winter and where successful Levantine financiers build themselves gorgeous palaces in the midst of reeking slums. As for Galata, it is the fermenting vat of the scum of the earth. It is doubtful whether in any city in the globe such an iniquitous population could be found as that which is huddled together by the water's edge from Kassim Pasha to Tophane. It is indeed an interesting region to the student of criminal physiognomy, for the lowest types of what must necessarily be called the civilized criminal classes fill the filthy streets, the poisonous lanes, and the reeking liquor-shops, the terror of the Europeans above and the object of righteous hatred and loathing to the Turks on the other side. The Greeks and Armenians, who lead a sort of underground existence, here make a good living, and by no means a precarious one, by a great variety of evil practices. Being all Christians, they all claim the protection of one or other of the European Embassies, and the political situation of Turkey renders it practically impossible for the Ottoman authorities to arrest or punish one of these malefactors, the slightest interference with whose liberty might at once be made a *casus belli* by the foreign government whose protection he would claim. There is hardly a liquor-shop in Galata, and there are few even among the

more respectable cafés in Pera in which a gambling hell is not kept in a quiet room at the back of the establishment. If the visitor's good luck survives the ordeal of a roulette-table having two zeros and nine or ten numbers, so that he actually wins something that he might take away with him, the establishment has at its disposal a private police force to rob him and, if necessary, to cut his throat so soon as he makes for the door.

As for Scutari, on the other side of the Bosphorus, it is a city of a very different type. The Turk is an Asiatic, and at the junction of the two continents distinguishes very clearly between the two. There are comparatively few Christians on the Asian side, and the houses which line the quiet streets show by their latticed windows that they are inhabited by Mussulmans. There is a certain air of peace, if not of prosperity, about Scutari, which is very restful after the crowded bazaars of Stamboul and the choking slums of Galata. There are few people in the streets, the carriages are old and shabby, and in the country, if not in Scutari itself, these are outnumbered by the primæval ox-carts—low, long-bodied conveyances upon clumsy wheels, any one of them big enough to transport a whole family with its belongings. One often sees these family parties. The women and children, the former more closely veiled than in Stamboul, sit close together side by side from end to end, the paterfamilias generally squatting by himself at the tail of the cart. His expression resembles that of the European father under the same circumstances—a combination of anxiety, weariness, and shyness by no means becoming to the solemn Oriental face. The



The Landing Place and Café at Scutari.

women, on the other hand, are intensely interested in the sights and incidents of the journey, and look longingly at your light carriage as you drive swiftly by. But there is not much to be seen in Scutari, unless you will take the trouble to climb the steep hill for the sake of the really magnificent view obtained there.

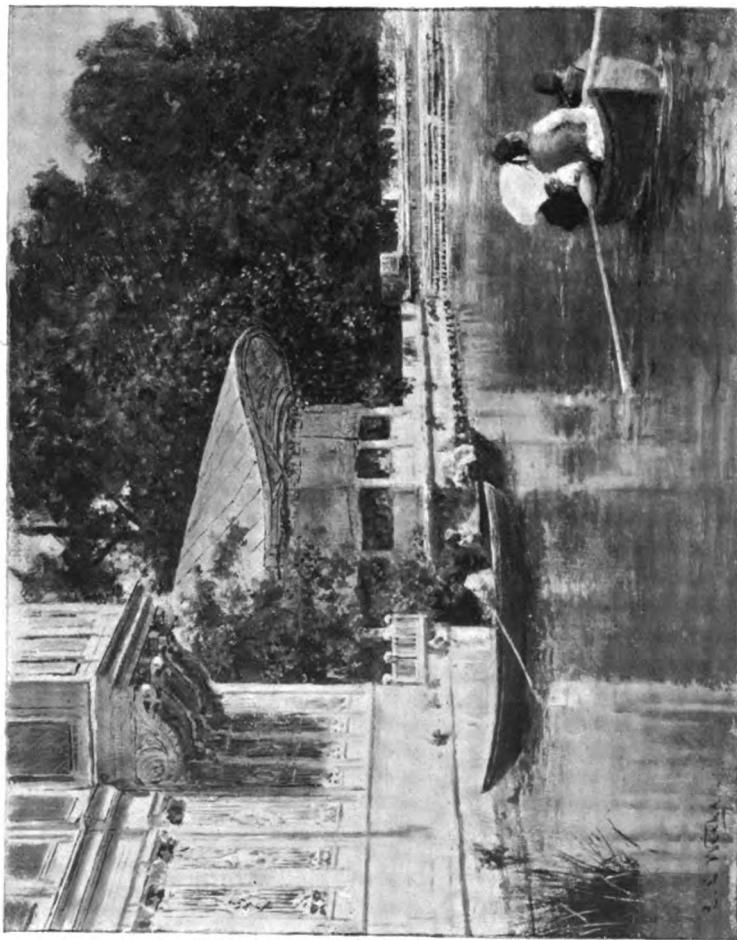
Kadi Keui, the ancient Chalcedon, is a much more interesting place, is more pleasantly situated, and, moreover, affords an attraction in the shape of a Turkish theatre, the only one existing in Constantinople or in the neighborhood. The play-house is a flimsy construction of boards at the end of the broad meadow behind the town, the scenery is sketchy, the music abominable, and the audience consists entirely of men. But the establishment is owned and managed by a first-rate comic actor, a Turk of the Turks, who, if he were well supported, would do credit to any stage in the world. There are not more than two or three performances a week, which take place entirely by daylight, and it is the practice of the theatre to await the convenience of the audience before ringing up the curtain. Though the building is of the nature of tinder, everyone smokes perpetually, and as usual where Turks are gathered together, the ice-cream vender and the coffee seller are constantly in demand. The action of the pieces is located in more or less mythical Eastern countries, and the plays depend entirely for their success upon the talent of the acting manager and proprietor. But even for one unacquainted with the language, his acting is worth seeing.

Beyond Kadi Keui, on the Sea of Marmora, and in full view of the Islands of the Princes, lies one of the most beautiful

spots in the whole neighborhood. The Fenar Bagche, the Light-house Garden, is a lovely grove at the seaward end of a narrow tongue of land. In successive ages the ancient plane-trees have overshadowed a temple of Hera, a summer palace of Justinian, and the wild flowers which have overgrown the foundations of both. Here in the hot summer the sea-breeze blows perpetually ; the Greek fishermen dry their nets in the sun and rest in the shade ; and in the " Bay of Reeds," between the point and the fashionable Moda Burnu, a few yachts and pleasure-boats ride lazily at anchor.

This side is rapidly outdoing the Bosphorus in the public estimation as a summer residence, and the land is rising very quickly in value. The air is drier, and in the evening there is not what the guides call the " cold draught " from the Black Sea. The shore has but one defect, the almost total absence of trees, except at such points as Moda Burnu and Fenar Bagche.

Of the Bosphorus itself it is scarcely possible to speak within these narrow limits. There is a great difference in opinion in regard to its beauty, but for my part I do not think it compares with the Gulf of Naples or with the southern coast of the Crimea. An irreverent American recently said that the Bosphorus was like the Lake of Como drawn through a keyhole. This is doubtless an exaggeration, but it is not without a foundation of truth. The massive towers of Kumeli and Anadoli Hissar, the European and Asiatic castles of Mehemet II., are imposing and picturesque, and the current of the Bosphorus runs between them at a rate which has earned it the name of the " Devil's Stream." But there is



The Sultan's Kiosk—“Sweet Waters of Europe.”

little else that has any claim to be called grand between Scutari and the mouth of the Black Sea. On the other hand, the shores are crowded with villages, villas, and dwellings of every description from the Imperial Palaces of Dolma Bagche and Beylerbey to the humble fishermen's huts below Anadoli Kavak. Until lately the Bosphorus was exclusively and especially considered the fashionable summer-resort of Ministers of State, Ambassadors, and rich Greeks; but, as has been already said, it is now losing its prestige in favor of Moda Burnu and the Islands of the Princes. Nevertheless it has a charm and enchantment of its own. The low undulating hills are covered with gardens, many beautiful buildings rise from the water's edge, and the water itself is crowded with craft of all sorts. There is little to distinguish one village from the next, though there are a few points of especial beauty, such as the Valley of the Blue Water—called by Europeans the "Sweet Waters of Asia," where the Turks congregate on Friday afternoons, as at Kiathane, with their wives and families and cigarettes—Therapia, Buyukdere, and the Valley of Roses. At Buyukdere, which means "the great valley," the Belgrade forest begins, stretching away for many miles to the shores of the Black Sea, as wild and beautiful a tract of woodland as can be imagined.

There are good roads through it in many directions, and many bridle paths, over which one may ride thirty miles on a summer's afternoon, almost without leaving the shade; and if one cares for contrasts—which after all are the levers whereby beauty moves the world—one may find them here.

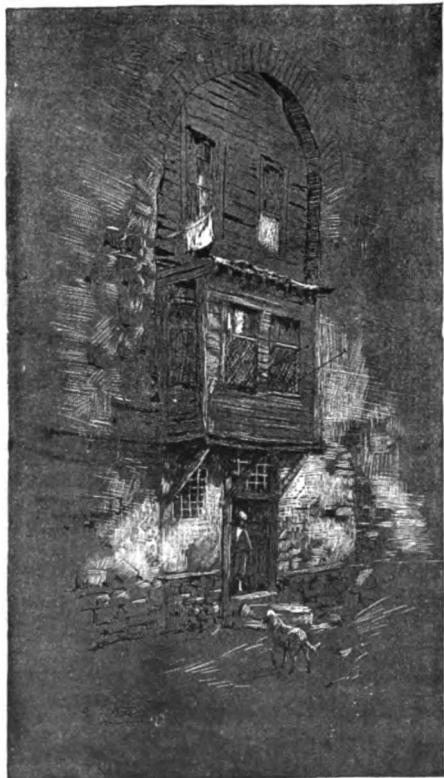
It is toward four o'clock as you mount, and the quay of

Buyukdere is beginning to be crowded again ; the steamers are coming and going to and from the pier, and the white-shirted Kaikjis are alert for passengers ; the Persian merchants are

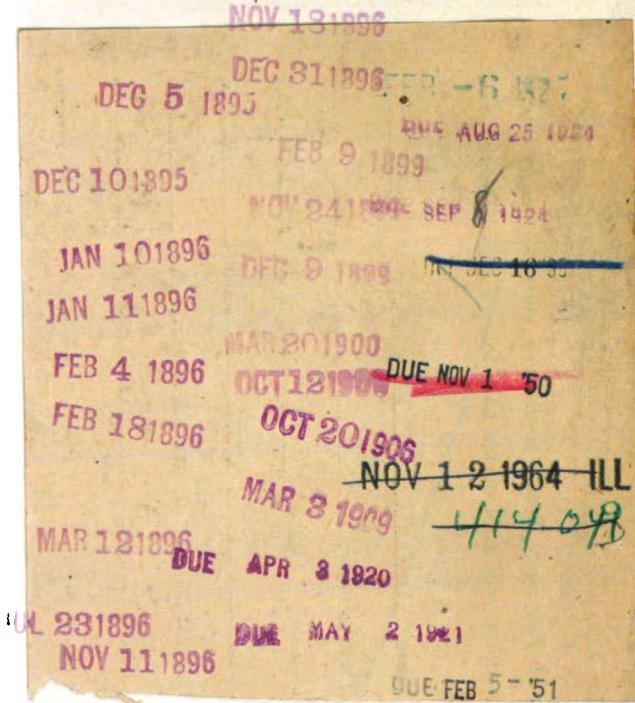
beginning to unroll their carpets for sale under the trees ; a dozen smart saddle-horses are led up and down by Turkish grooms, the itinerant barber is shaving the head of a boatman in a shady corner, and the ice-cream seller yells “dondurma kaimak.” Out on the blue water three or four white - sailed cutters belonging to idle diplomatists are slowly beating up against wind and current, and the smell of warm roses floats out through

Old Gateway in the Wall which has been Blocked up with a House.

the gates of the Russian Embassy garden. You ride away from it all, through the narrow little street beyond, between the shops of the butchers and bakers and grain-sellers, to



the broad Meidan. Up to the right through the valley, then, and away into the mysterious forest, till you have left it all behind you—Stamboul, the Bosphorus, the Greeks, the Turks, the Armenians, and the diplomatists. And at last, if you ride far, you will come out when the sun is low upon a bleak moor which ends suddenly with the sharp precipice of a perpendicular cliff. There you may dismount from your horse and stand by the ruins which once were the house of exiled Ovid, gazing out upon the pale waves of the lonely sea, and dreaming, perhaps, of the land no longer distant from you now, which was the cradle of all those races, good and bad, that have struggled, and struggle still, and will strive for ages yet, over the world's great bone of contention—Constantinople.





CONSTANTINOPLE

F. MARION CRAWFORD